

# NEH Application Cover Sheet (FZ-250394)

## Public Scholar Program

### PROJECT DIRECTOR

---

Dr. Bruce Joseph Schulman

(b) (6)

**E-mail:** bjschulm@bu.edu

**Phone:** (b) (6)

**Fax:** 617-353-2556

**Field of expertise:** U.S. History

### INSTITUTION

---

Boston University

Boston, MA 02215

### APPLICATION INFORMATION

---

**Title:** *"Are We A Nation"?: The Emergence of the Modern United States*

**Grant period:** From 2017-07-01 to 2018-05-01

**Project field(s):** U.S. History; Political History; Cultural History

**Description of project:** A reinterpretation of the early twentieth century US, the study explores the transformation of American nationhood between 1896 and 1929--the era in which the United States emerged as a world power, international economic leader, and reservoir for displaced persons from across the globe. Most studies of the period have focused on the so-called Progressive Era. They overlook the larger processes of national integration and transformation that the Progressives, their rivals and their successors negotiated. At the same time, the book addresses enduring questions about nation-building: both as a process--how can people build functioning nation-states out of diverse regions and peoples and as a matter of concept: what are the constituents of a nation? How do people understand nationhood and how have those conceptions changed over time? The US in this period offers a telling case because nation-building shifted from knitting together regions to integrating diverse peoples and cultures.

### REFERENCE LETTERS

---

Brian Balogh  
Compton Professor  
History  
University of Virginia  
bb9s@eservices.virginia.edu

David Kennedy  
Coe Professor  
History  
Stanford University  
dmk@stanford.edu

# NEH Supplemental Information for Individuals

This form should be used by applicants to the NEH Fellowships, Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan, Awards for Faculty, and Summer Stipends Programs.

Field of Project:

Field of Project #2:

Field of Project #3:

Project Director Field of Study:

The mailing address provided on the SF 424-Individual is for your ☐ work ☒ home

## Institutional Affiliation

Are you affiliated with an institution? (If yes, provide information below.) ☒ Yes ☐ No

Institution Name:

Street 1:

Street 2:

City:

County:

State:

Province:

Country:

Zip / Postal Code:

DUNS Number:

Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):

Status: ☒ Senior Scholar ☐ Junior Scholar

# Reference Letters

## Reference 1

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

Title:

Department Name:

Institution:

## Reference 2

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

Title:

Department Name:

Institution:

# Nominating Official (Summer Stipends Applicants Only)

Are you exempt from nomination? If not, provide information below. ☐ Yes ☐ No

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

Title:

Institution:

“Are We A Nation?”: The Emergence of the Modern United States, 1896-1929

“Today, the issue is national life,” Republican Senate candidate Albert Beveridge instructed an Indiana audience in 1898. “Are the American people a nation, or are they an aggregation of localities?” Beveridge’s question highlighted profound worries among his contemporaries about the cohesiveness of the United States and the need to rethink the very nature of American nationhood at the turn of the century. More and more Americans saw the potential for the nation to become not merely a union of like-minded entities--a band of brethren--but an integrated whole extended far beyond the political realm, not only knitting together diverse regions but also healing divisions of class and national origin. Powered by advances in communication and transportation, it became possible--even necessary--to conceive of the United States as a single national market, a national audience, and even the site of a unified American culture.

*Are We A Nation?* deploys the lens of nation--the profound contests over the nature and meaning of American nationhood--to reinterpret this crucial period in the emergence of the modern United States. Nearly all studies of the early twentieth century US have focused on the so-called Progressive Era, capital P, capital E. Adopting “reform” as their unit of analysis, even the best of these studies suffer from tunnel vision. Bent on identifying the Progressives (were they innovative professionals, discontented middle class Victorians, ocean-hopping cosmopolitans, reactionary businessmen, or urban liberals?--all those answers and more have been given), categorizing their efforts, and explaining their demise, the scholarship overlooks the larger processes of national integration and transformation that the Progressives, their rivals and their successors negotiated. The result has been an interpretive quagmire: efforts to make sense of the era, one historian wrote, resembles, “Ahab and the whale, Sisyphus and the boulder, Charley Brown and the football.”

But beyond reviving scholarly debate about the emergence of the modern United States, this book addresses enduring, disturbingly topical broader issues. Nation-building remains one of the great questions of our time: both as a matter of process--how can people build functioning nation-states out of diverse regions and peoples (if that's even possible) and as a matter of concept: what are the constituents of a nation? How do people understand nationhood and how have those conceptions changed over time? On the face of it, the United States at the turn of the twentieth century would seem to offer little insight into the struggles plaguing contemporary Ukraine or Syria or Mexico, but the United States forms a particularly compelling case study--both because it generated so much explicit debate about the meaning and nature of nationhood at the time and because the focus of nation-building efforts shifted during that period from an emphasis on knitting together diverse regions to a concern with integrating different peoples and cultures.

In the 1890s, when President McKinley went on his celebrated healing tours to the South or took pains to make an ex-Confederate general commander of the cavalry during the war with Spain, conceptions of nation revolved primarily around geographic regions. A quarter-century later, however, they focused mainly on the challenges of absorbing different languages, cultures, nationalities, of creating, in the words of Woodrow Wilson, "a great composite people."

The book also sheds light on many problems of contemporary governance: the nature and extent of government economic regulation, the control of immigration, the ways that different legal regimes and electoral systems structure policy outcomes: all of these were lively issues and in some cases, had their origins during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, among a group of state-builders who believed that building a great nation required a shift from making policy largely through case-based, adversarial, legal processes toward centralized administrative forms of governance.

*Are We a Nation?* represents the culmination of a career-long inquiry into the relationships between politics and broader cultural change in the twentieth century United States. Throughout my career as writer and teacher, I have believed that scholars have an important role

to play in public debate. In addition to authoring three books and editing or co-editing six others, over the past two decades, I have authored numerous opinion pieces for the a wide array of public outlets, including the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *International Herald Tribune*, and the *San Jose Mercury News.*, as well as websites such as *Politico* and Reuters. Published by the Free Press, my 2001 book, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Politics, and Society*, reached a broad public, was reviewed widely in the popular press, and received attention from numerous television and radio outlets. *The New York Times* named it one of its “notable books of the year.” I have also appeared as an expert commentator on numerous television and radio programs, consulted on productions by the History Channel, PBS, and ABC-News, and twice served as an NEH panelist reviewing proposals for documentary films. Bringing historical perspective to contemporary conversations about politics, economy and popular culture has been--and remains--the central preoccupation of my career.

*Are We A Nation?* pulls this intellectual enterprise back to the beginning of the twentieth century--the era in which the United States emerged as a world power, international economic leader, and reservoir for displaced persons from across the globe. In 1898, Beveridge could still wonder whether the Stars and Stripes flew over a “great nation” or merely an “aggregation of localities.” A generation later, Americans had emphatically answered that question, not only (or even primarily) by constructing new instruments of national political power, but also by knitting together markets, audiences, and social experiences. What seemed new to me as scholar of post-World War II America (the focus of my previous books), I soon recognized had deeper, more complex roots--antecedents that I analyze while exploring what came to define twentieth-century American nationhood and seeking to answer Beveridge’s question--“Are We a Nation?”

Upon its completion Oxford University Press will publish *Are We A Nation?* in its celebrated Oxford History of the United States (the series that includes Pulitzer Prize winning volumes by Daniel Walker Howe, David M. Kennedy, and James McPherson. At this writing, I

have conducted substantial research in Washington, DC, New York, Texas, Illinois, California, and the rich collections of the Harvard University Libraries. I have drafted nine of nineteen projected chapters. I plan to complete another chunk of research and one or two more chapters during the current academic year. With support from the NEH Public Scholars program, I would purchase release time from my teaching duties at Boston University during the Fall 2017 to complete the manuscript.

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY—BRUCE J. SCHULMAN

### **SELECTED MANUSCRIPT SOURCES:**

- Gifford Pinchot Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
- Frederick Newell Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
- Morris Sheppard Papers, Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, TX.
- John W. Davis Papers, Yale University, Dept. of Manuscripts and Archives.
- Seth Low Papers, Columbia University Archives
- Frank P. Walsh Papers, New York Public Library.
- National Historical Publications and Record Commission, Microform publications of selected papers of Jane Addams, Washington Gladden, Warren Harding, D. W. Griffith, and the Women's Trade Union League.
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman Papers, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- Popular Sheet Music Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

### **SELECTED PUBLISHED SOURCES:**

- Congressional Record*
- The Public Papers of the Presidents*
- Foreign Relations of the United States*, Select Volumes.
- Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Widener Memorial Library, Harvard University.
- Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report of Basil M. Manley, Director of Research and Investigation, U.S. Senate, 64<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Sess., (Washington: GPO, 1915)
- Report of the Country Life Commission, United States Senate, 60<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess, (Washington: GPO, 1909).
- National War Labor Board (1918-1919), A compilation of the actions of the National War Labor Board, (Washington: GPO, 1919).
- Minutes of the War Industries Board from August 1, 1917, to December 19, 1919.
- Final Report of the United States War Industries Board, as submitted to President Wilson by its chairman, Bernard M. Baruch, (Washington:GPO, 1919)

### **SELECTED MULTIMEDIA SOURCES:**

Pathe Newsreels, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.  
Digital Collection, War Posters, <http://digital.lib.umn.edu/warposters/warpost.html>  
Multicultural Song Index, Race and Racism songs,  
[http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/multicultural/arts/race\\_songs.html](http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/multicultural/arts/race_songs.html)

### **SELECTED PERIODICALS:**

- Literary Digest*
- The Forum*
- New York Times*
- The Crisis*
- The American Mercury*
- McClure's*
- New York World*



## CURRICULUM VITAE

Bruce J. Schulman

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

e-mail: bjschulm@bu.edu

History Department  
226 Bay State Road  
Boston, MA 02215  
(617)-353-8306  
(617)-353-2556 (FAX)

### POSITIONS:

7/08-Present	William E. Huntington Professor of History, Boston University
1/10-7/13	Chair, Department of History, Boston University
1/94-7/08	Professor of History, Boston University
6/97-9/02	Director, American and New England Studies Program, BU
7/87-12/93	Assistant Professor to Associate Professor of History, UCLA

### EDUCATION:

9/81 - 3/87	Ph.D., History, Stanford University, Sept. 1987
	M.A., History, Stanford University, Sept. 1982
9/77 - 5/81	B.A., Summa Cum Laude with Distinction in History, Yale University, May 1981

### BOOKS:

*From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980*, (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991). Revised Edition with New Preface published by Duke University Press in 1994.

*Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism*, (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995).

*The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Politics, and Society* (N.Y.: The Free Press, 2001).

*Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, co-edited with Julian Zelizer, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

*The Constitution and Public Policy*, co-edited with Julian Zelizer, (State College; Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009).

*Making the American Century: Essays on the Political Culture of 20<sup>th</sup> Century America*, edited volume, (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2014).

*Faithful Republic: Religion and Politics in the 20th Century United States*, co-edited with Andrew Preston and Julian Zelizer, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015)

*Recapturing the Oval Office: New Historical Approaches to the American Presidency*, co-edited with Brian Balogh, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

*Media Nation: Media and Politics in Modern America*, co-edited with Julian Zelizer, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming)

*Are We A Nation: The Birth of Modern America, 1896-1929*, (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, in progress).

#### **ARTICLES:**

20 Scholarly Articles and Book Chapters and Over 100 Op-eds and Popular Essays

#### **ACADEMIC AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS:**

3/15	National Semifinalist, Robert Foster Cherry Award
9/13-6/14 (Stanford)	Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences Fellowship for 2013-14
5/13	Dean's Award for Excellence in Graduate Education
1/13, 1/10 and 9/07	Reappointed OAH Distinguished Lectureship Program.
12/07	Jeffrey Henderson Senior Humanities Fellowship for 2008-09.
10/07	United Methodist Church Scholar/Teacher of the Year.
10/06	Nancy Lyman Roelker Award of the American Historical Association.
1/06	Named to HNN list of "Top Young Historians."
1/04	Named to OAH Distinguished Lectureship Program.
12/01	<i>New York Times</i> "Notable Books of the Year" for <i>The Seventies</i> .
12/00 and 12/01	Commendation for Outstanding Teaching, Boston University Dean's Office
12/99	Blum-Kovler Foundation Fellowship.
3/99	Fulbright Senior Professorship (Declined).
2/96	Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History Fellowship for 1996-97.
4/93	Harriet and Charles Luckman Distinguished Teaching Award.
4/93	Eby Award for the Art of Teaching.
12/91	National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for 1992.

January 28, 2016

To whom it may concern:

I am writing on behalf of Bruce Schulman, who is applying for the Public Scholar Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am extremely pleased that the NEH has recognized the importance of humanistic work in the form of books for a broad public, which is my deepest goal for the history list at Oxford University Press.

The book Bruce Schulman is writing for OUP is among the highest-profile projects on American history not just at the Press but across the publishing industry. His volume for the Oxford History of the United States series, covering the period from 1896 to 1929 (very tentatively titled *Are We A Nation?: The Emergence of the Modern United States, 1896-1929*), has been long awaited by the reading public, as evidenced by the numerous emails I receive a month asking about its status. When complete, it will be the work of a historian who combines astute and provocative interpretations with a lively and anecdotal narrative style, and it is sure to continue the success of this prize-winning series. The books in this series are not small—they synthesize a kaleidoscopic array of topics with a broad interpretation to collectively create a biography of the nation—and they typically have an extent of some 900-1000 pages, which makes them major undertakings in the authors' careers. Schulman's work covers the making of modern America through such key themes as mass immigration, the achievement of political rights by women, the transformation of government at both the federal and state levels, the country's involvement in World War I and its subsequent status as the dominant world power, the creation of an economy driven by mass consumption, consumer credit, and marketing, and the emergence of a "modern temper" in literature, music, cuisine, theater, and movies.

The reviews of the proposal for this work by top scholars were very enthusiastic, including one who stated: "With his 'Galileo' argument—that the era of 1898-1929 contained more evidence of a modern vision that we have previously realized or that Americans at the time were able and willing to accept—Schulman is able to organize a wide range of material in an analytically coherent structure...He has a sound starting point here that promises quite a fascinating book."

OUP signed this book for its trade list, with full marketing and publicity to commercial and academic audiences. As such it will be published in print and electronic form and be disseminated globally by OUP. Book club and audio deals are in place for all the other books in the series, and this one will follow suit. At this point, given changing market forces, it is too soon to have a definitive print run, but first print figures on books in the series typically run between 30,000 and 50,000 copies. Oxford History of the United States books are the top tier of the trade list at OUP, and they are pitched to booksellers

(brick and mortar and online), the media (print, social media, radio, TV), and others in the publishing community.

I hope this information is of use as you consider Bruce Schulman's application for the NEH Public Scholar Program. The support of this fellowship time and money would ensure that this much-anticipated book is published in the not-too-distant future.

Sincerely,



Susan Ferber

Executive Editor ♦ Trade and Academic Books

(212) 726-6103 ♦ (212) 726-6443 FAX ♦ [susan.ferber@oup.com](mailto:susan.ferber@oup.com)

NEH Public Scholar Program  
National Endowment for the Humanities

25 February 2016

*(Please note: I received your request for a reference letter in early February, while I was traveling in India. I returned just last evening, and hasten to get this to you as soon as possible, with apologies for its lateness, which should in no way reflect on the merits of Bruce Schulman's application.)*

I write in support of **BRUCE SCHULMAN**'s application for support from the NEH Public Scholar Program.

I have known Schulman for his entire professional life, from the time that he entered Stanford's graduate program in History some three decades ago. I served as his academic adviser, taught him in several classes, employed him as a teaching assistant and a research assistant, and supervised his doctoral dissertation. We have remained in frequent contact since he left Stanford in the late 1980's. I believe I can offer an informed and objective assessment of Schulman's qualifications for your support.

They are, in a word, formidable.

Bruce Schulman is an unfailingly creative historian, an indefatigable researcher, and an exceptionally artful writer. He is among the leading scholars of American history in his professional cohort. He has already made substantial, original contributions to our understanding of the role of federal policy in generating the post-World War II "Sunbelt" (in From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt), and of the tortured decade of the 1970s (in The Seventies). He has also written the best single-volume biography of Lyndon Johnson. And he is well-known to a broad audience that reads his frequent and consistently cogent opinion pieces in major newspapers and magazines.

Because of my high regard for Schulman's scholarship and admiration for his writing talent, as editor of the Oxford History of United States (OHUS), I have invited him to contribute the volume in the series that concerns the early twentieth century. (Its working title is "Are We a Nation? The Emergence of the Modern United States.") It is for the completion of that work that he now seeks your support.

Originally edited by Richard Hofstadter and C. Vann Woodward, the OHUS series is a flagship project of Oxford University Press. Volumes published to date include Robert Middlekauf's The Glorious Cause, James McPherson's Battle Cry of Freedom, James Patterson's Grand Expectations, Gordon Wood's Empire of Liberty, Daniel Walker Howe's What Hath God Wrought, and George Herring's From Colony to Superpower. As the nature of those titles suggests, the series has striven to remain faithful to Hofstadter's and Woodward's original intention to bring the highest scholarly intelligence to bear on various topics in American history in a manner that will speak with equal authority to professional and lay readers alike. Indeed, the materials that describe the purposes of the Public Scholars Program uncannily echo the charter documents that founded the OHUS series.

The considerable portion of Schulman's manuscript that I have seen thus far give abundant promise that "Are We a Nation?" will take its place in the distinguished company of the titles noted above. He has fresh things to say about a host of subjects that defined the early twentieth-century era and continue to engage the Republic today: massive immigration; the vexed relation between a dynamic modern economy and governmental institutions designed in the pre-industrial era; rapidly shifting cultural norms; explosively disruptive new technologies; and the eternal debate about America's proper role in the world. I am confident that his book will readily find a large readership, and that they will be well-served by a volume that will illuminate both the past and the present.

In short, Schulman is a scholar of proven originality and accomplishment. "Are We a Nation?" will likely reshape the narrative of the early twentieth century in the United States for both his professional peers and for the general reading public. It is difficult to imagine a more compelling case for the support of the NEH Public Scholar Program, and I hope you will give him close consideration.

Sincerely,

David M. Kennedy  
Donald J. McLachlan Professor of History Emeritus  
Stanford University



February 24, 2016

Dear Selection Committee:

I am delighted to recommend **Bruce Schulman** for an NEH Public Scholar Fellowship. His scholarship in the field of U.S. history and American Studies and his stature in the profession merit my strongest support. The project he plans to complete should he receive a fellowship makes an important contribution to our understanding of the first third of twentieth-century U.S. history. As with all his work, Mr. Schulman proposes to examine the ways in which the broader culture – in this case consumer culture – reshaped the political economy. He is well positioned to enlighten our understanding of this period.

*Are we a Nation?: The Birth of the Modern United States*, is likely to make three seminal contributions to the literature on this period. First, it will reperiodize the early twentieth century. Currently, this thirty-year period is dominated by scholarly debate over the Progressive Era. Schulman will not neglect Progressivism, but will organize his narrative around the larger and ultimately more enduring trends of consolidating national markets, spreading a more uniform culture across the continent, and building the modern military and administrative state. Mr. Schulman will also place these developments in an international context, thereby shedding new light on them. Most boldly, Mr. Schulman will suggest that organizing historical narratives around waves of reform may not be the most effective way to understand American historical development. *Are we a Nation?* will take advantage of decades of exciting work in social and cultural history, as well as an approach to politics often labeled “American Political Development. Integrating this voluminous literature and delving into primary sources at key points in the narrative promises to make this book the equal of the other much admired works published in the Oxford series that Mr. Schulman is writing for.

Mr Schulman is a scholar of enormous standing in his field. I am most familiar with two of his books: *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt* and *The Seventies*. I have used both of them in my graduate colloquia. *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt* is a highly significant monograph. By tracing the links between Federal social and economic power and the South, Schulman identifies one of the more dynamic developmental trends in the region. Well researched and carefully argued, *Cotton Belt to Sunbelt* documents the shift in the coalitions that supported various forms of aid to the South. Schulman notes the narrowing and targeting of aid, from New Deal programs that promised greater social equity to programs largely controlled by Sunbelt apologists for business that stressed infrastructure and military expenditures. Professor Schulman’s first book established him as one of the leading voices on the twentieth-century South, national political coalitions, and the links between economic and political development. Today, the book is a

staple of leading graduate courses in both Southern and political history.

*The Seventies* is a broad and synthetic survey of the United States in that often-neglected decade. Schulman quickly moves beyond the familiar presidential narratives that to date have been used to capture the decade and offers a searching analysis of some of the key turning points in American cultural, economic and political history. The work that I would compare it to is James Patterson's *Grand Expectations*. That is because Schulman balances coverage with an impressive knowledge of the specialized literature of his period, a thesis of his own, and a style that is both engaging and authoritative.

Although Mr. Schulman has applied for a fellowship to take a leave from teaching, I would be remiss if I did not comment on his influence as a teacher and mentor. As director of the Miller Center Fellowship Program, I have had the good fortune to recruit and work with Sarah Phillips, a graduate student trained by Professor Schulman. Sarah is currently an associate professor at Boston University. From Ms. Phillips' description of Professor Schulman's contribution to her development as a scholar and from the comments of colleagues who have observed Mr. Schulman first hand, it is evident that he is an outstanding mentor for young scholars. Mr. Schulman's service as a "mentor" to other Miller Center fellows has been extraordinary. He has worked with two of our most accomplished fellows. The first was Margaret Pugh O'Mara, who is currently an associate professor at the University of Washington. In 2004, Margaret published *Cities of Knowledge* (Princeton). Mr. Schulman was instrumental in shaping the argument and framing the comparative material in that work. He also worked with Kim Phillips-Fein, an Associate Professor at New York University. Kim's first book, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan*, was published in 2009 by W. W. Norton. It benefited greatly from Mr. Schulman's Miller Center mentorship. Given the untiring devotion to graduate training that I have observed at a distance, I was not surprised that Mr. Schulman received the Roelker award for outstanding scholarly mentoring.

One of the leading twentieth-century historians of his generation, prodigious researcher, outstanding synthesizer, armed with an exciting and important project, I could not recommend Mr. Schulman more highly for a fellowship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'B. Balogh', with a stylized, cursive script.

Brian Balogh  
Compton Professor  
Chair, National Fellowship Program  
Miller Center  
Department of History  
University of Virginia